

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method to manage network addresses, comprising:  
  
receiving, according to a first protocol, a first request for a network address from a client at an agent for a virtual private network;  
  
procuring, according to a second protocol unknown to the client, said network address **and an assignment identifier** by said agent for said client from a network address provider, **said assignment identifier to indicate a status and time period said client may use said network address;** and  
  
sending, **by said agent,** said network address to said client.
2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, said procuring further comprising:  
  
creating a second request for said network address using the second protocol;  
  
sending said second request to a network address provider;  
  
receiving said network address from said network address provider; and  
  
storing said network address in an address assignment table.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said creating comprises:  
  
assigning a unique identifier to said client; and  
  
creating said second request using said unique identifier.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising managing use of said network address by said client.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein said managing comprises:

~~receiving an assignment identifier corresponding to said network address,  
said assignment identifier indicating a status and time period said client may use  
said network address;~~

monitoring a time said client has used said network address;

comparing said time to said time period; and

requesting an extension to said time period in accordance with said comparison.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said network address provider is a dynamic host configuration protocol server.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said network address comprises an Internet Protocol address.

8. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said first protocol is a layer two tunneling protocol.

9. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said second protocol is a transport control protocol and internet protocol.

10. (Currently Amended) A method to create a virtual connection to a network, comprising:

receiving, according to a first protocol, a message by an agent for a virtual private network from a client requesting a virtual connection;

sending, according to a second protocol unknown to the client, a request for assignment of a network address by said agent for said client;

receiving said network address and an assignment identifier, said assignment identifier to indicate a status and time period said client may use said network address; and

creating said virtual connection using said network address.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein said creating comprises creating said virtual connection using said network address in accordance with a security scheme.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein said security scheme is a security scheme in accordance with the DES Specification.

13. (Currently Amended) An article comprising:

a storage medium;

said storage medium including stored instructions that, when executed by a processor, result in receiving, according to a first protocol, a first request for a network address from a client at an agent for a virtual private network, procuring, according to a

second protocol unknown to the client, said network address and an assignment identifier by said agent for said client from a network address provider, said assignment identifier to indicate a status and time period said client may use said network address, and sending, by said agent, said network address to said client.

14. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 13, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a processor, further result in procuring by creating a second request for said network address using the second protocol, sending said second request to a network address provider, receiving said network address from said network address provider, and storing said network address in an address assignment table.

15. (Original) The article of claim 14, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a processor, further result in creating a second request by assigning a unique identifier to said client, and creating said second request using said unique identifier.

16. (Original) The article of claim 13, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a processor, further result in managing use of said network address by said client.

17. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 16, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a processor, further result in managing use of said network address by ~~receiving an assignment identifier corresponding to said network address, said assignment identifier indicating a status and time period said client may use said network address, and~~ monitoring a time said client has used said network address,

comparing said time to said time period, and requesting an extension to said time period in accordance with said comparison.

18. (Currently Amended) An article comprising:

a storage medium;

said storage medium including stored instructions that, when executed by a processor, result in creating a virtual connection to a network by receiving, according to a first protocol, a message by an agent for a virtual private network from a client requesting a virtual connection, sending, according to a second protocol unknown to the client, a request for assignment of a network address by said agent for said client, receiving said network address and an assignment identifier, said assignment identifier to indicate a status and time period said client may use said network address, and creating said virtual connection using said network address.

19. (Original) The article of claim 18, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a processor, further result in creating said virtual connection in accordance with a security scheme.

20. (Original) The article of claim 18, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a processor, further result in creating said virtual connection in accordance with the DES Specification.